THE POETRY REVIEW

33 PORTMAN SQUARE, LONDON W.1

EDITED BY JOHN GAWSWORTH, F.R.S.L.

Vol. XLI **MARCH-APRIL, 1950** No. 2

★

CONTENTS:

POETRY PAGE

No Trumpet: Robert Armstrong 63
The Heart of England: J. C. E. Bowen 63
Advice to too Constant a Lover: James Brockway 63
Wadham: Arthur Caddick 64
Nineteen-Thirty-Seven: P. E. B. Canny 64
In Starlight: R. L. Cook 65
A Clergyman's Face or The Manichee: Frances Cornford 65
The Atom: York Crompton 65
You: Nancy Cunard 66
Up to You: Oliver Davies 66
Painter of Umbria: Rosemary Dobson 67
From 'A Sequence to Easter': Iain Fletcher 68
Bagatelle: Adrian Frere 69
The Sighing Lady: Phyllida Garth 71
Old Tom: Wilfrid Gibson 72
The Sea: W. G. Golding 72
Immortality: Leslie Greene 72
Inscription: Charles Higham 73
Requiem for Love: Anna Iliffe 73
The Debt: Wrenne Jarman 74
Little Man: Fredoon Kabraji 75
The Ending: Philip Lindsay 76
In this Spring: Norman Pallant 76
Prodigal's Return: Geoffrey Parsons 76
To Matthew Arnold: Edgar Proudman 77
The Nightmare: J. M. Russell 78

In La Paz: James Steel 78
On the Poop of Thelamye: Rachel Annand Taylor 79
Bell-buoys: Wilfrid Thorley 79
The Priest: Millicent Wedmore 80

PROSE

Edward Lear: Three New Poems, edited by W. M. Parker 81
Forty Fretted Years by Robert Armstrong 84
The Poetry of Sheila Wingfield by Monk Gibbon 88
Poetry in Australasia (VI) by Philip Lindsay 94
Sixteen Singers by William Kean Seymour 98
Short Reviews by G. S. Fraser, John Waller, Peter Russell, W. M. Parker and G. R. Coulthard 103
Letter to the Editor by Roy Campbell 109
The Lord Alfred Douglas Sonnet Award for 1949 110
The Premium Award by Thomas Moult 111
Announcements 112

NO TRUMPET

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Dreamers, go down warily:
No trumpet shall sound for you
But you shall meet on the shore
And joy in your quiet singing.
And the daybreak shall join in your singing:
All the harps of the morning
Shall strike symphonies for your coming,
But go down warily, oh you dreamers,
Lest the night shall awake
And the trumpets of night
Shatter the darkness with their blazonry.
Whisper softly, you dreamers;
Whisper softly your dreams,
That the way may be corded with the silver of dreams
For the guidance of hearts.

THE HEART OF ENGLAND

For the picture of that name painted by Eric Kennington in memory of Richard Hillary.

J. C. E. BOWEN

Disfigured, sightless, but at heart serene—
We have no right to weep as you depart,
As, bending where the English grass grows green,
You plant a crimson rose in England's heart.

ADVICE TO TOO CONSTANT A LOVER

JAMES BROCKWAY

O love me less and let your love
Have something rare about it,
Lest growing too familiar,
My folly dare to flout it.

By short reprieves keep me aware,
O let me sometimes doubt it:
We do not love the air we breathe,
Although we die without it.

WADHAM

ARTHUR CADDICK

The leather-bound Law Reports smelt like saddles,
And with jurisprudence there was mulled claret,
Wafting the Indies to our mock King's Bench,
And all were lulled by cinnamon and wine.
Moots, we termed those after-dinner sessions,
Moots with our Tutor as the learned judge,
Our pleasant Tutor, so discreetly bored,
Whom, lisping Ulpians, we styled My Lord.
We took decided cases to Appeal,
With custom as a counterfeit for zeal,
Two on each side as counsel, in stiff shirts
To give a grave decorum to our speech.
We piped, canaries, in an infant forum,
And scattered grains of learning were our groundsel.
Our faltering was emphasized by chimes,
Telling the same hour at discordant times.
Way past the window stood that great bronzed beech,
A stately tipstaff at pretended courts,
Watching it all, as beadles do, unknowing,
Shedding each year, like leaves from old Reports,
Its tokens of our coming and our going.

NINETEEN-THIRTY-SEVEN

P. E. B. CANNY

Can there be worse
Than this extra-Auden-airy verse?

IN STARLIGHT

R. L. COOK

The voices of the suburb stray
In the thick dusk through muted crowds.
The stars along the hill away
Above the grindstone of the day
Are nibbling at the vagrant clouds.

Night, the far traveller, begins
To finger factory and park;
The spider in the city spins
His web of dust; the seven sins
Begin to posture, leap and bark.

But we across the frost-starred land
Will wander, past the muffled stream,
Watching the shadows, hand in hand,
Until the hill protects us and
Only the stars invade our dream.

A CLERGYMAN'S FACE or THE MANICHEE

FRANCES CORNFORD

Female and male He made them from the first
  But you can NOT approve the Creator's plan.
How odd you'll look in Paradise, poor man,
  With lips still pursed.

THE ATOM

YORK CROMPTON

I am the first and last; and in between
  The desert watches and the snows advance.
From me the branches lift their leafy green
  To twirl the spirals of their summer dance.
I am no less in man; and yet to him
  I seem but figures to turn inside out.
For what high purpose? At his merest whim
  He splits me—and he blows life's candle out.

YOU

NANCY CUNARD

"I am that mystery that men call the brain—
And I am tall and real, a heady truth;
My inspiration is not age or youth
But splicing of the hand and mind. Again,
I am the slant shaft angling for response,
The laugh in the honey seen against the sun;
Yet more, the full of shade when day is done—
Dawn am I not—love's enemy. And once
The tide of China shocked with Afric's blood
In me; I am the majesty of this,
The skull, the form, the all that holds the kiss
For you, against the time of fullest flood.
I am the rage, the temper of the hour,
The sapient, waiting soil that is man's floor."

UP TO YOU

OLIVER DAVIES

O, should my songs intrude
Their dissimilitude
  In your mind's heaven,
Esteem them if you please
Tom-fool soliloquies
  Eavesdropped at even.

But should you deem my verse
An angel-whisperer's
  In that same heaven,
Let all men hear and see
Your glee. Give thanks for me
  Seventy times seven.

PAINTER OF UMBRIA

ROSEMARY DOBSON

Francesco Calvi, Umbrian by birth,
A silent lad, scraped angels in the dust
Then struck for pens and brushes, swagged them up
(Aged twelve or thereabouts) and quit his town.
Whiter than oxen with the dust he trod
When these he passed, and taller by a length
Than the last roof-tops of San Severo
Diminished, as he reached the further slope
And, looking back, appraised the distance done,
He came to Florence. Once apprenticed there
Forgot the olive-trees, the Umbrian hills,
The small black tempests of the cypresses
In the blue morning.
Briefly, made his mark,
Proffered his studies to the Priory
(Jostling his fellow-students for the laurel)
And now with brush upon the chapter-walls
He hymns his praises.
Stroke on stroke of paint
Builds up the perfect Virgin. There she sits
Enthroned beneath a Gothic canopy,
Her hands held upwards, fingers touching thus,
Two thin white lilies pressed against the wind.
Devout her eyes, her soul attuned to hear
Angelic voices heralding a birth.

Attentive to angels, diligent to lilies,
Francesco Calvi paints from dawn to darkness,
Then lights a taper; ponders his creation.
At night he dreams of angels. All day long
Their bright wings brush against him, till it seems
The world is Florence, Florence is the chapel
And all the people in his world angelic.
Now is the marbled floor almost completed;
The shining walls and towers beyond the window,
The flowers falling through the air from Heaven
Want not a brush-stroke.
One place is empty,

Waiting among that lovely brood of creatures,
Fit space to put a man in. Our Francesco
Grown old and tired beside his magnum opus
Measures his height against the unpainted plaster,
Straightens his back, puts down at last his brushes
And joins his angels grouped about the Virgin.

The legend says they sang an Ave of welcome
Till all the monks turned over in their slumbers
And climbed a further rung up Jacob's ladder.

FROM 'A SEQUENCE TO EASTER'

(v)

IAIN FLETCHER

You are beyond the scope
Of any hand or eye;
Always my ears escape
From your consistent sigh.

Where eye and ear must lose
Their tortuous imagery
You begin, and rise
To crush that vacancy.

How could the heart confess
The meaning of your day
If there were emptiness
Beyond the hands that pray.

Although the spice, the stone
Deride the patient eye
It is by that alone
They floriate, they die:

Yet budding moments still
Embalm You in the sense:
Although the tree, the hill
And the long clothes be hence.

For You are gowned with time
Upon another tree:
Your suffering is at Prime,
Bliss in contumely.

If I could touch and cling
To movements of a mood:
The agonies which bring
My real sense its food;

That door, that tortured side;
The candour of a thorn,
Would leave the taken bride
Infirm as the new born.

BAGATELLE

ADRIAN FRERE

Hark, and you may hear
At the passing of the bier
The Golden tongues of the bowled bells toll,
The ominous repetitive, reverberating roll
Of the drums.
See, it comes.

Listen to the wailing of the strident violin,
The high hysteric laughter, the derision and the din,
The tempest through the tree tops, the whistle and the howl,
The diabolic frolic,—
Then silence,
Macabre, immense.

The blatant boast of the big drum shatters the silence,
Deep with the power of the forceful thunder's growl;
And the shock of the clash of the cymbals re-echoes in scorn
The bronze defiant challenge of the brazen-throated horn.

Bugle, blow bravely to battle;
Drum beat, embolden the bold;
Cymbalic clanging of metal,
Shatter the wold.

Still stealthily behind us sings
The softer voice of the insidious strings,
Insinuating slumber in the soul.
A softer, sonorous, soporific roll
From the drums,—then sleep,
A soothing enormity, and deep.

Asleep and a' dream; and now the music plays
No more the harsh command of brazen tongue:
No longer do rude echoes flout the wind,
But softer melodies; sadly inclined,
Perhaps to melancholy, songs are sung;
Songs that were sung since mankind's earliest days,
All kinds of old and dim-forgotten lays:
Songs to the flowers, songs to the skies,
A lover's lyric to his dearest maid;
Sentimental melodies, and sentimental sighs,
And a sleepy sentimental serenade.

Fairy footed the flute's air flies
Over the visage of him who sleeps;
Trills to laughter, falters to sighs,
Skips and dances, twirls and leaps.
A silver-clad Harlequin
Dancing in the moon,
Hoping that his Colombin
Will look and love him soon.

A sudden thud. And then again;
Then the soft muffled drum-sticks are throbbing like rain,
Louder and louder and louder; the pain
Of monotonous beating is bursting the brain,
Till sudden and steely the silence lies slain.
The violins skid violent up the scale,
The turbulent world is agog with the gale.
Climax after climax crescendoes into sound,
Crescendoes into climax, and drops giddy on the ground,
Breaking the skies with beating,
Of drum-sticks swiftly sleeting
On the drum, and again and again on the drum.
Armageddon in disastrous cacophony is come,
And nothing else remains except the thudding of the drum.

THE SIGHING LADY

PHYLLIDA GARTH

She sighed,
She sighed;
"My husband is the best of men," she cried.

There came a young man to her door
Had never been that way before,
He smiled at her a certain way
And said, "Good-day, my dear, good-day."

She sighed,
She sighed;
"My husband is the best of men," she cried.

He talked with her so charmingly,
So sweetly and disarmingly
That when he gave her kisses three
She sighed, "You'll be the death of me."

She sighed,
She sighed;
"My husband is the best of men," she cried.

He said, "My darling, don't you sigh
For no-one loves you more than I
And I will stay with you a while,
So kiss me, pretty one, and smile."

She sighed,
She sighed;
"My husband is the best of men," she cried.

And when the sun rose bright and clear
He said, "It's time I went, my dear,
It's time I went, my love, my life,
To take your husband from my wife."

She sighed,
She sighed;
"My husband is the worst of men," she cried.

OLD TOM

WILFRID GIBSON

Old Tom, the tinker, eyed
The slattern shuffling by his side,
And vaguely wondered how it came to pass
The bonnie bouncing lass
He'd chosen for his bride
Had shrunk into this haggard crone—then he
Chuckled to think it well might be
Peg, too, was puzzled how she'd come to go
Traiking through life with such an old scarecrow.

THE SEA

W. G. GOLDING

I will match your cry with my cry,
Who have found no peace in my bed;
Oh weary wanderers, you and I,
We wild, uncomforted,
Because of the darkness and the depth
Because of the distance and the span,
Must cry all night to the shut sky,
The untold sorrows of sea and man.

IMMORTALITY

LESLIE GREENE

The countless sands, the endless seas
  Few pearls they give to Earth,
Time, equal in its mysteries,
  Few stars to life gives birth.

The millions now in embryo,
  The living and the dead,
A grain of all who come and go
  To greatness will be wed.

Too rare those triumphs highly prized
The Gods to mortals give,
How few with names immortalised
Beyond the grave will live.

INSCRIPTION

CHARLES HIGHAM

Sculptor, do not betray
the music of his hands;
take no strange laugh away;
the moment where he stands
is young, inviolate.
Create
the echo and the fabric of his lay.

Beneath the eyes
wonders in secret dwell;
love never lies,
desire can burgeon hell
in the ripe young tree.
Sculptor, be
the very breath that leaves him when he dies.

REQUIEM FOR LOVE

ANNA ILIFFE

When this year's leaves are dead,
And Autumn's splendour closes,
And faded are the roses,
And spent the words we said.

Worthless as dross are heart-beats
That made the Summer's glory;
Ended is our love-story.
Wrapped in death's winding-sheets.

What's left is just December
And Winter's icy blast.
Our high song is now past,
And ours but to remember.

Christmas will come with holly,
And mistletoe, and mirth;
But what has no re-birth
Is that we lost through folly.

THE DEBT

WRENNE JARMAN

To my bed at evenfall
  Hosts of craning shadows come—
All my creditors, for all
  Lent towards my little sum.
Some nor word nor welcome seek,
Some with longing looks would speak.

First, my father—from his eyes
  Look I forth, and hold from him
Colours, chords and symmetries
  That once made his senses swim—
And if nothing be denied,
Petulance and pomp and pride.

Then, my mother—none of her
  Beauties fell to me, but yet
Her small hand, fine-lined, austere,
  Curves upon my coverlet.
Gifts with wings it willed to me—
Love of God, of fantasy.

Still more legacies endure
  Of earth and water, air and fire,—
I should like to know for sure
  What rocksalt from this grandsire,
What cayenne from that grandam,
Went to spice the dish I am.

Yet if Time rolled back to show
  All who were to bless or blame
For each heritage we owe,
  Those forbears might do the same—
And through misty aeons grieve
Faulty Adam, feckless Eve.

LITTLE MAN

FREDOON KABRAJI

"Man not only lives
 but dies by bread
 alone", the cynic said.

"Life not only gives
 but takes for love alone"
 the philosopher said.

"Bone joined to bone
 are the living and the dead"
 the dreamer said . . .

"By our own hand
 why should our millions die:
 himself man crucify?

 After our green land
 by us and our sons is slain
 who shall remain?"
 the little man cried
 upon man's barbarian tide . . .

"When you have torn
 My Image from My tree
 I will still be—
 Eternally am I born"
 said Christ the Lord:
"*I* will still be
 through your fire and your sword—
 but lonely,
 Eternally . . . "

THE ENDING

PHILIP LINDSAY

Thank Venus, all that's over now,
All's over, over, over.
The only solace I have is that
I have another lover.

The houses of our souls are set
In separate suburbs, far apart.
I've lost your soul's address—O, I
Am shut out from your heart.

Then let you go your way, my dear,
And I'll go mine. Perhaps you might
Some day seize another boy—
I hope he beats you every night.

IN THIS SPRING

NORMAN PALLANT

This is the high desire, the stilling point
Of all the mind's confusion . . .
In this spring
Walk gods among the leaping swords' acclaim,
And the vast voices of the universe
Shout me with anthems through mortality.
I thunder at the gateway . . .
In this spring
Is more than March and more than roistering.

PRODIGAL'S RETURN

GEOFFREY PARSONS

Though I am not exact
In all the ways of faith
The love I swear is not
A fantasy, a myth.

I have been here and there
And shall go in the future
Urged by some restlessness
That animates my nature.

Yet when I roam some path
By accident discovered
Only our steps, my love,
And not our hearts, are severed.

These are but winding ways
Down which I stumbling go
Leading me back at last
Consistently to you.

Can you forgive me this?
Is it too great a fault?
Do I appear to you
Cheapened and smirched and spoilt?

Oh I am not exact
In all the ways of loving
Yet you have all of me,
All that is worth the having.

TO MATTHEW ARNOLD

EDGAR PROUDMAN

Troubled by doubts, yet seeming to obey
  An inner, stern, admonitory guide—
  Grave and austere, yet carrying at your side
Sweetness and light beneath a cloak of grey—
Manfully did you battle on your way
  Unaided, but that honourable pride
  Of intellect upheld you to abide
The labours of the long Victorian day;

We cry you hail! strong soul, who could endure
  The stumblings of integrity, alone,
When all about you strode with a secure
  And certain step, their known to you unknown;
Ah! give us courage under more obscure,
  More menacing horizons than your own.

THE NIGHTMARE

From the Gaelic of Sorley Maclean

J. M. RUSSELL

Two years bye, last night,
When I had thought my darling torn
With hurts as ill as any borne
By woman since first Eve saw light,
We were together in a dream beside
The stone wall laid between
The grounds of my first school, the scene
Where lads and lassies in their play had cried.

She lay in my arms, and my lips
Nearing her lips when, in dread
Surprise, from behind the wall a head
Of horror started and the long dark tips
On the clawing hands of the fearsome ghoul
Snatched my throat in a sudden snare,
And there followed words of sad despair:
"When it comes to the point you're a gormless fool."

IN LA PAZ

(Roof of the World)

JAMES STEEL

The sudden glad bright vision of a mountain
At the end of a street.
The bowed shoulders and the vivid shawl
And the dark bare feet
Of an Indian woman carrying
A limp child in the heat.

ON THE POOP OF THELAMYE

RACHEL ANNAND TAYLOR

Deep-dreaming in his scarlet cloke
  Sate the High Prince, Pantagruel,
In Thelamye, tired of his folk;
  And from his loosening fingers fell

The Greekish tale of Heliodore.—
  Drowsily broke the pearling surge.
Farcical, faint, as ne'er before
  Sounded the Friar and Panurge.

Far, far away o'er worlds of water
  The whitest lady ever made,
Walked Prester John the Great Khan's Daughter
  Beside a lake of jewel jade.

The Fengbird blazed and burned beside her
  Upon a smouldering incense-tree;
And Prince Pantagruel descried her,
  Deep-dreaming upon Thelamye.

BELL-BUOYS

WILFRID THORLEY

Tolling buoys are tossed about
Where the estuary runs out

To the rampant sea's assault
Underneath a sunless vault.

Far away you see the sails
Fleck the phantom coast of Wales;

Streaming funnel-fumes take flight
Far into the infinite;

Gulls are blown and clouds are rent
On the windy firmament.

Here the wreckt hulls feed the lust
Of the slow-consuming rust,

Sepulchres that hide alone
Blinded skull and bleached bone.

Whom do these sad belfries call
Unto the confessional?

Whom can their chimes soothe or stun
Where the white sea-horses run,

Stumble, and with steamy breath
On the black rocks leap to death?

Nothing lives for bliss or bale
Where these roaring tides prevail,

Crying loud along the coast
"We are of the Devil's host,

And these belfries are but Hell's
Soul-deriding sentinels!"

THE PRIEST

(To a critical layman)

MILLICENT WEDMORE

You watch him with appraising eyes,
  So ready to condemn
The words that are not always wise,
The acts, the looks, that may not rise
  To heights you ask of them.

Yet, when the plague cart crawled the street,
  The cross upon a door
To you was signal for retreat,
To him for entrance, that where beat
The wings of Death, he might entreat
God's mercy on the souls that fleet
  From Earth's tormented shore.

EDWARD LEAR

THREE NEW POEMS

EDITED BY
W. M. PARKER

Lately a writer in *The Times Literary Supplement* remarked that Edward Lear "was not *all* nonsense", and, quoting certain lines from *The Dong with the luminous nose* to illustrate "Lear in a serious interlude", he wondered "whether, after all, he might not have made a serious poet". That Lear *had* been a serious poet in his youth is revealed in a notebook of Edward Lear, containing MS. poems, written when he was nineteen, which is preserved in the Hugh Sharp of Hill of Tarvit Collection in the National Library of Scotland. These early poetic effusions, pensive, melancholy, and emotional, give no indication that their writer would become a master of nonsense verse. As they have never before been published, they are now printed here, by the kind permission of Lear's literary representative, Mr. Franklin Henry Lushington, of Ceylon, as specimens of what Lear could accomplish in serious vein.

Above the earliest of them there is a pencil drawing of the temple celebrated, and after the last line the signature and date: *E. Lear, October 23d., 1829*:

RUINS OF THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER, ÆGINA, GREECE

Many the feet that filled
Thy halls and marble stairs
When the sun was used to gild
Thy white-robed worshippers:
There were forms too bright and fair,
Who were kneeling at thy shrine,
For their hearts to feel the snare
Of homage, false as thine;
There were shouts of revelry
From thy mount rose high and long,
And the dark and distant sea
Used to echo back the song!
And the far-off glorious clashing
Of thy cymbaled votary
Came through the soft air flashing
Like the sounds of years gone by!
Ægina!—they are fled!
Thy fame hath perishèd!

The moss is on thy walls—
Silence and deep despair;
And the ruin as it falls
Gives the only echo there!
Thy music is not heard, —
Thy high-raised roof is gone,
And the solitary bird
Sits on the topmost stone:
There are sunbeams ling'ring still,
Through thy far white pillars seen,
But they only seem to tell
Of what thou once hast been!
And oft in silence o'er thee,
The dark cloud passes on—
And it sheds a deeper glory
O'er thy wild oblivion!
Ægina!—with the dead
Thy fame hath perishèd!

Type of thy parent clime!
In ages past away,
Greece was like thee sublime—
Like thee was bright and gay;
And on thy mount wert thou,
Shrined in her orient sky, —
A gem upon the brow
Of her fair liberty!
But Greece has fallen like thee!
Desolate—wildly lone; —
Her sons, the brave and free,
Forgotten and unknown.
The echo of her fountains
Seems her lost children's sigh,
And on her lov'liest mountains
Sits dark Captivity! —
Ægina!—Greece!—the dead,
And ye have perishèd!

From this classical theme Lear turns to the expression of a sentimental mood in the next poem, which, without title, is subscribed *Bury Hill. E. L. Novr. 1829*:

When the light dies away in a calm summer's eve
And the sunbeams grow faint and more faint in the west

How we love to look on till the last trace they leave
Glows alone like a blush upon modesty's breast!
Lonely streak! dearer far than the glories of day
Seems thy beauty, 'mid silence and shadow enshrined,
More bright as its loneliness passes away—
And leaves twilight in desolate grandeur behind!
So when grief has made lonely and blighted our lot,
And her icy cold chain o'er our spirits has cast,
Will not memory oft turn to some thrice hallowed spot,
That shines out like a star among years that are past?
Some dream that will wake in a desolate heart,
Every chord into music that long has been hushed,
Mournful echo!—soon still—for it tolls with a smart,
That the joys which first woke it, are long ago crushed!

In the third and last poem Lear conveys a moral sentiment in a light, lyrical strain. It, too, is unnamed, but bears the subscription, *E. Lear. December 3d. 1829*:

From the pale and the deep—
From the dark and bright—
From the violets that sleep
Away from light:
From the lily that flashes
At morn's glad call—
The bee gathers honey
And sweets from all.

There are hearts like bees
In a world such as this,
That are given to please
Through sorrow and bliss:
Be the heaven of life
As dark as it will—
Amid pleasure and strife
They are smiling still.

Thye've a tear for the sad,
But there's balm in their sigh,
And they laugh with the glad
In sunshine and joy:
They give hope to the gloom
Of the mourner's thrall—
Like the bee they find honey
And sweets in all.

FORTY FRETTED YEARS*

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The description "Modern" when applied to poetry has developed such a peculiar, if not unique, connotation that many critics would prefer—and possibly rightly—to substitute "Contemporary" as a less invidious word.

Nevertheless, which ever word is used, it is clear that the flow of English poetry is like a broad river in which the main stream is steady and ever-widening, taking into itself the serving tributaries of new fecundity and experiment. Like a river, however, it is rippled by surface winds and has cross-currents and shelving rapids that act, so to speak, as the modulations of the main theme. The river narrows, or leaps in spate as times as it passes through the gorge of war or of personality, and expands and grows turgid as others, but the mighty volume is still there.

Before the first great war an Indian Summer of Romanticism was in being, and the river was wide and slow with a nostalgic calm—just as if, in that calm, were the apprehensions of coming rapids and storm. We find a retreat in verse into an unreal museum of enchanting retrospect exemplified at its best by the early work of Yeats, the final work of Hardy, the wistfulness of W. H. Davies, the escapism of Rupert Brooke and the coloured and tuneful delights of Flecker. There were in addition the balancing elements of virility in the wit of Belloc, and the striding beats of Kipling and Chesterton.

Yet even in the fading calm there were the threats of a subtler pattern. The Parnassians, the Symbolists, and the Imagists with Ezra Pound as their god and the young T. S. Eliot as his prophet, were propounding astringencies or flamboyancies with strange idioms as new forms of reality.

So the river entered the gorge of war with the waters already frothed and the Indian Summer almost over.

The rearguard of the Romantics passed into battle in full regalia, and we were rewarded by the clarion, patriotic utterances of Brooke, Noyes and others, and the elegiac notes of Grenfell and Binyon.

Then the rapids of war brought the river against the jagged rocks of calamity, and young poets, facing them squarely and shattering against them, brought an autumn and winter to the shining summer, with Sorley, Sassoon, Owen and Rosenberg as landmarks.

Their weapons of protest, mainly Romantic, were sharpened by adaptations from the Symbolism and the Imagism and by their own experimental striving to suit form to terrible mood.

* *The Poetry Review does not necessarily subscribe to all Mr. Armstrong interesting opinions—Editor.*

Chastened thereafter, with the Indian Summer technicians deeply shaken by war, poetry passed into the wider channels of peace.

Yeats in particular, who was to be one of the three major influences before the next abrupt gorge of war hove in sight, gained a new acerbity, first bitterly marked in his 1916 Easter poem, indeed, finding heightened precision and imagery.

The main stream was therefore fretted in a way that, while affecting the current and direction, nevertheless came down with clear waters from the fountain springs of the past. Masefield, Blunden, Housman, Ralph Hodgson, James Stephens, Robert Bridges (now almost an octogenarian) and a few like them, maintained the stream of pure lyricism only mildly influenced by veering currents.

A wind had arisen that was destined to be the second major influence between the two world wars. A fresh if frustrated mysticism grappling in turmoil with weapons formulated for the purpose burst with delayed thunder in the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. His poetry, built on his self-searching theory of "inscape", using an adaptation of early English musical beat notation designated as "Sprung Rhythm", reached new heights of felicity, but often of complexity also, when his alliterative and assonantal Celticism becomes excessive and strained.

Also at this time Edward Thomas, by virtue of some 140 poems written in two short years before he was killed in the war, was having a deep effect through the quiet, restrained reconciliations of his poetry.

In America a similar influence was being exerted by his old friend Robert Frost, and indeed was becoming increasingly important here. Frost's poetry had the intimacy and natural eloquence of conversation—with a controlled near-to-the-soil dourness and directness.

Another influence from America was being disseminated by Hart Crane; but of a different quality for which this ill-starred poet has not yet received full credit. His vivid gifts of abrupt, evocative imagery and contrapuntal music held major promise when he died in 1939 at the early age of 33.

Gathering up, however, all the minor and intermediate effects into a gale of salutary influence, came T. S. Eliot, now in the richness of his mature development. Stemming from America, he had absorbed the imagery of Pound, the starkness of Owen and Sassoon, the dry precision and beat of Frost, the mystic imagining and verbal fluency of Hopkins, and blended them with an even greater saturation of traditional learning at once literary and classical.

Despite the full impact of Eliot the calm underflow had nevertheless maintained its singing strength through the mature majesty of Walter de la Mare, the work of Robert Graves, Richard Aldington, Richard Church, and the "Neo-Georgians," Anna Wickham, Ruth Pitter, John Gawsworth, and many other natural singers . . .

But now the major influence of Eliot was reinforced by new streams springing from social interest and awareness as the fearful approach to fresh rapids of war was apprehended. The waters were tossed by cross-currents of verse, at once sociologically conscious, experimental, virile, caustic and controversial.

W. H. Auden was the accepted 'new' technician, but hardly less so was Louis MacNeice, with a direct spiritual perception, and Cecil Day Lewis with a harnessed lyricism. They, with Stephen Spender, traditional and vividly sweeping, and their elder Herbert Read, penetrating, cautious and astringent, were in the vanguard of many voices, at once both analytical and urgent.

The flow was accordingly whipped to a fret of confusion by the obscure and referenced wrestling of Eliot, and the immediacy of brilliant left-wingers divorced from art for art's sake. Yet the perceptive singing still kept its flow, undisturbed by sociological fret, obscurantism or neo-freudian introversion. Fine poets such as Victoria Sackville West, Roy Campbell, and John Betjeman were adding their lyrical voices.

So poetry swept on to the new war with its deeper gorge and its new manifestation. Sidney Keyes, David Gascoyne, Alun Lewis, and Clifford Dyment, to name but a few of the young poets confronted with the vortex, produced work with the metrical pliability of Tradition, yet with the wrestling awareness of Eliot, and the probing deftness of their immediate predecessors. They faced and transcended the torment of war with a personal vindication that, in a way history may show, extended in vision and eternal validity that of their brother poets of the first advent.

Donne and Blake found a restored urgency and recognition, and Rilke and Hölderlin were rediscovered with a new significance.

So the river emerged into the broad waters of peace again. It was an uneasy peace, with a slow seeping puzzlement that produced initially, even as its pre-war prelude did, a number of strident voices, often shouting to shock into political or social awareness. But such voices were the fitful gusts of a noisy minority.

The immediate reaction from war was a negative and analytical, if romantic, movement typified by Alex Comfort, a prolific writer with a clipt, montage style often found in recent American poetry, biological in analysis and propagandist in conclusion.

Soon two women began to have more than a minor significance: Edith Sitwell, with an adept evaluation of line and language and a restricted yet intense range of imagery, and Anne Ridler, with a sure-footed yet half-emasculated lyricism.

They sounded gongs of assured faith sometimes to the point of mysticism, as if lending a hand to their war-perplexed brothers.

What, however, of the sociological poets of the 'thirties? Auden in an American hermitage has launched out, glassily and satirically, in a long

poem with coruscating experiments in technique, about a group of sottish and bewildered people in a bar parlour. MacNeice has turned to classical drama, Day Lewis is producing brilliant critical studies and lyrics of a somewhat nostalgic quality, and Stephen Spender is pausing retrospectively. It is possible to ask whether these four young "veterans" still around forty have resigned themselves to handing over the baton.

George Barker, a contemporary, perhaps the most brilliant imagist of them all, is still producing wonderful images. The Welsh singer and meteor, Dylan Thomas, who, like Barker, absorbed Hopkins, Celticism and Eliot at times to the point of indigestion, yet with a native individualism, has produced, with a contrapuntal technique, perhaps four of the finest singing poems of recent years, but has now turned, for the nonce, to cinema script-writing.

So the singing flow still gathers strength in despite; often, however, in a less involved fashion than with Dylan Thomas and in a purer English tradition, as with Walter de la Mare, still singing, if only occasionally. Among a myriad, it flows from the impeccable technique of Redwood Anderson, William Kean Seymour and T. W. Ramsey to the younger voices and classical lyricism of John Heath-Stubbs, Jean Kenward, John Waller, and many others in seemingly resistless spate: albeit all hear the thunder on the left of significant living, for though the waters have widened to tranquillity, it is a deceptive tranquillity. It is a tranquillity of awareness and reorientation, of reception and deployment, in which the major influences of Hopkins, the later Yeats and Eliot are integrated, and in which there is an awareness of Celtic incipience, American cutting and dryness, the felicities of assonance and off-rhyming, and the virtues of a counter-pointed imagery.

In this tranquillity also are being absorbed the personal equations of Sidney Keyes, Alun Lewis, and other young war poets discovered in the Tarsus of war, and also the questioning pronouncements of the significant continental poets of the occupation, Nordahl Grieg in Norway, Eluard, Aragon, and the Existentialists in France, Alberti in Spain, Quasimodo in Italy and Seferis and Siklianos in Greece.

So the waters gather strength, the tributaries flow in, and the winds churn the waters as we complete our navigation of the rocks, rapids and fretted surface of forty years, conscious above all of the mighty flow beneath the fragile craft of the critic, as he peers ahead, with an ever-present wonder, for the next bend and new vistas of grandeur.

THE POETRY OF SHEILA WINGFIELD

MONK GIBBON

Years ago Lafcadio Hearn pointed out to his students that it is far harder for a poet to write simply than to write elaborately, some of the greatest poetry winning our admiration because its creators have faced successfully this acid test of simplicity. For the simple poem is not the poem of the simpleton. Rather it must be trebly charged with meaning and with emotional significance. Sappho is utterly simple. She wishes that she may reach up and touch the sky. She faints. She longs for the absent one. That is all. But it is everything. Music has a share in the secret—Housman, for example, knew every possibility of his five-vowelled lyre—but it lies still more in the sincerity, the intensity of feeling behind each line, each syllable almost.

The poem may be four lines, three lines, even two; it does not matter. Utterly brief, its implications nevertheless may cover all the unuttered melancholy of youth as well as its carefree mirth:—

You laugh as did the dancing tide
That lifted Venus from the waves;
And yet I know you hide
Your sighs in the sea-caves.

It may seem to contain the whole history of the heart:—

WINTER

The tree still bends over the lake,
And I try to remember our love,
Our love which had a thousand leaves.

Or it may create circumstance, emotion and, by a vivid parallel image, an actual scene:—

A MEETING

I wait for when we meet again and feel as he
Who strides bare hills, then ripening lowlands, to the sea.

These three poems are from Sheila Wingfield's first book, *Poems,* published a little before the second world war. The overtones are not the overtones of that cryptic phraseology which Yeats and Eliot have made popular, but the overtones of the sharp visual image which depends for its force not on any oblique reference but on its powers of direct evocation and association. Her work was to earn high praise from the poets them-

selves, who are the best judges of integrity. Yeats when he read them had called the poems remarkable, noting their "style and distinction" and the "precise and subtle vocabulary" employed. Walter de la Mare declared that if he gave a list of the poems which had delighted him most "it would consist of more than half the titles in the book" and went on to speak of "their tragic beauty, the pure imaginative realisation, their pathos . . . and the masterly craftsmanship". And James Stephens added a characteristic footnote when he said—"She sings as freshly, as sweetly and, at times, as curiously as anyone".

"Curiously" may seem a strange word to use of such straightforward work. But there is an almost uncanny sense of identification with the past in a number of the poems. They lie outside time in a sort of timeless present:—

> From his high room which looks on hills and plain
> Telemachus leans out and dreams again
> Of searching for his Father while the Nurse
> Will fold his clothes and put away his purse
> And set the sheepskin on the bed . . . .

That is topical, in the same way that Flecker's "bald-headed seaman" is topical. And just as de la Mare in *The Song of the Mad Prince* has created a miniature sixteen-line Hamlet for us, so Sheila Wingfield seems to have given us the whole flavour of the Odyssey in seven lines:—

> Odysseus Dying
> I think Odysseus, as he dies, forgets
> Which was Calypso, which Penelope,
> Only remembering the wind that sets
> Off Mimas, and how endlessly
> His eyes were stung with brine;
> Argos a puppy, leaping happily;
> And his old father digging round a vine.

Though the concept of this poem is reflective its impact upon us is the impact of living facts. Any comment there is, is like the wind sighing lightly through the boughs of green-vestured trees.

In a much longer poem, *Chosroe the Second,* there is the same recreation of the past, as though out of some ancestral memory, and the poem abounds in vivid and convincing detail. Even when a theme seems most universal she allows it to reach us through the particular and concrete instance. In *The Chieftain* the experience of one man, though it has the poignancy of an individual case, transcends any particular occasion, and seems to speak for us quite as much as for him:—

> But as within his mind
> The oar would not desert its thole,

He back to his dark courtyard came
Uncomforted of all his ills.

Whether the theme is four thousand years old or of to-day, the creative imagination throws the same robe of magic over each alike. And the standard is always that stark and austere and utterly simple standard of Greek poetry, wedded to an emotion which is warm-blooded and real. Take for example her advice to the lover who has not realised his maiden's impatience with the immediate, or her longing preoccupation with what is distant and romantic:—

Leave her; to wild islands go
Or green-domed cities caped in snow;
To roughened lakes whose yellow froth
Is bitter as a god's wrath . . .

Wander, uneasy as the tides,
Until your maid at last decides
That, lonely in the shining rain,
She longs and longs for you again.

In 1946 Sheila Wingfield published her second book, *Beat Drum, Beat Heart*, a poem of more than two thousand lines, divided into four parts, *Men in War, Men at Peace, Women in Love, Women at Peace*. The poet has let the poem take its course, weaving into its continuity, very skillfully, whatever inspiration offered. Broadly speaking war and love are each treated as the moment of revelation and, in large measure, the forerunners of subsequent disillusion. War's initial exultations, vividly conveyed, are followed by the moment when the combatant asks,

Where is my cause, that seems as cold as a blown
Mist?

The first section of the poem ends with the inevitable protest against war's waste and futility, but what we are scarcely prepared for is to find in the section which follows not only a picture of the recaptured serenity of peace but a reminder of the monotonous inertia, or the fussy pointless activity, which may accompany its return:—

We'll go no more to the woods, they're now bricked up
And villas grow as campion by the way
And all along wet tarmac hoardings show
In boredom . . .

The remaining two sections which concern love show an amazing variety of treatment—a variety thanks to which we are continually being surprised and delighted by some fresh tangent taken by the mind or eye. But like war, love seems to promise too much and only one thing with

certainty—suffering. It too has its exultations:—

innocence of mornings
Milky new without a name,

when

The lightest gesture, the least sign,
Can alter our whole fate.

Although it fails to bring happiness, love's absence may mean endless regret. We are given vignettes of three such lives. Again and again the capacity for suffering is revealed, even in the mother watching her children playing happily around the garden bonfire:—

She looks
At their napes, at the back of their knees and thinks
How to guard them from danger, from fear
Forever.

The poet is nearest happiness when she contemplates nature in one of its restful moods, or the human scene in some rural backwater. Then for a moment what Gibson called "the heartbreak in the heart of things" is forgotten, and even anxiety assuaged. Sometimes she reveals an intense subjectivity that tortures itself and is tortured by the objective world. But a moment later her delight in the pageant of life has reasserted itself.

Each time *Beat Drum, Beat Heart* is re-read its range and mastery impress themselves more forcibly on the mind. It is weighted with the sense of life's irony and imperfections: it is tragic; but it is perhaps less tragic than I have made it out to be. When we escape from the undercurrent of melancholy it is generally to pause for a moment in the intimate thought of the restful daily routine.

Man in this poem seems to know too much of his condition and surroundings and too little of himself and his real nature. The nostalgia is that nostalgia which we all know, the nostalgia for certainty, the nostalgia for heaven. Small wonder then that for this restless mind the oar refuses to desert its thole and that we return again and again uncomforted to the contemplation of the dark courtyard of our mortal fate. But despite its undercurrent of sadness, the melancholy of the poem is counterbalanced generously by its richness of vitality and by its sense of beauty. *Beat Drum, Beat Heart* takes the reader on a far and varied voyage but makes him a willing argonaut. And even the human tragedy has its moments of unexpected relief,

So will a voice, at random
In the fields, become
A structure of compassionate sounds
Which you can climb like ladders in the air,
Until the fugal strength and argument declare
You noble, sad and great.

In her third book,* which has recently been published, I find the same quality of integrity and the same individual note which marked the earlier two volumes. It confirms Sheila Wingfield's right to belong to the hierarchy of real poets. Her voice is her own and she uses it to say things that I cannot remember any other poet having tried to say. At the same time she is a symptom of our age in that her themes are for the most part cerebral themes. It is a part of her triumph that the result is not cerebral poetry, but poetry in which emotion plays a strong part. The explanation, of course, is simple enough. In this age in which knowledge floods towards us from all points of the compass, and faith at the same time recedes, intellectual issues are quite as likely to be the focus point of our emotions as any other. We suffer from a nostalgia of the spirit which is almost more poignant than any personal sentiment. Deprived alike of the comfortable and cocksure optimism of the nineteenth century and the equally cocksure and almost equally comfortable scepticism of the eighteenth, we are left to battle with stark fact and stark mystery as best we can. The soul must fight for its life.

The soul of this particular poet shows plenty of fight. She admires the emperor Hsüang Tsung for dying in his search for the medicine of immortality:—

> To be at rest
> Is but a dog that sighs and settles: better
> The unrelenting day.

Those are brave, momentarily defiant, words from a spirit which craves peace and craves security as much as any of us, but which refuses to buy them at a price:—

> Even the Lybian Arabs take retreat
> To their Green Mountain, up a thousand feet,
> Their grazing lands. But I'm shut out;
> *No entry* even by deceit;
> Not with my eyes clamped tight
> Against the speckled night;
> And never in my work, whose beat
> Hurts with its knock and actual daily pulse
> Of stinging joy, short ease and constant doubt.

In this slim volume, she contemplates once more the human predicament; her mind ranges over the field of knowledge, or she takes some trivial circumstance of everyday life and discovers in it food for deep

* *A Cloud Across the Sun.* Sheila Wingfield. The Cresset Press, 6s.

reflection. She makes the landlord of Hell claim as his "special pets", his "revered, ensconced, darling privileged lessees"—anyone who

carefully will knife hope;
Anyone provoking the child's scream;
Anyone who is delicately and daintily mean
Or wilfully feeble.

She is sardonic, merciless to herself and others, and then suddenly tender. Whatever she says seems to come from a deep, smouldering intensity of thought and mood. Any touch of humour survives almost in spite of the underlying implications of the very line in which it appears. She is pledged to the quest for truth but she has few illusions as to the likelihood of being successful. So many aspects of her talent are summarized in the poem *While Satyrs Hunted for a Nymph* that I shall conclude this note on her poetry by quoting it in full:—

While satyrs hunted for a nymph
As we for strawberries in a wood,
Philosophers, their blood and lymph
Excited by the search for Good,

Found Cause in Space; and tracked Despair
In Time; saw human Destiny
And Reason swaying in the air
Like a bee-tumbled peony;

Perceived (but never told their School)
Truth transparent as a shrimp
Darting backwards in a pool;
And Thought with all its tendons limp.

They are gone. Their guarantees
Of cure have left us, every one,
Like sailors thirsting for a breeze—
And still the breeze drops with the sun.

POETRY IN AUSTRALASIA

6. FRANCIS WEBB (b. *Circa* 1924)

PHILIP LINDSAY

One is automatically suspicious of very young poets when they write with the assurance of maturity, and when at the age of twenty-two Webb produced *A Drum for Ben Boyd** I felt afraid for his future. This seemed not a young man's poetry. It lacked the exuberance one expects from youth, the lyrical gusto and that self-conscious scorn of life raised to guard a thin skin. Scornful it was, but also it had pity and youth commonly can feel pity only for itself. The form of the work derived from Kenneth Slessor's *Captain Cook* but the vision was Webb's, a cold unsentimental vision that saw through humanity's pretences and turned inside out the hearts of different men, each of whom narrates his memories of Ben Boyd, a Scottish adventurer who in 1848 arrived in New South Wales and, with the ease of a scoundrelly idealist, founded banks, juggled the colony's financial system, cheated numerous speculators and built himself a town at Twofold Bay. Bankruptcy was his inevitable end and after this failure he vanished over the Pacific skyline, disappearing during a shooting trip at Guadalcanal. A ship was chartered to seek any traces of him and she returned with a skull which was proved to have been that of a native. Such was the theme Webb chose for poetry.

He did not quite succeed. When in Slessor's sequence never for one moment does one forget Captain Cook who from the first to the last poem stays unforgettably alive, in Webb's one never does see Boyd. He remains a phantom in whom one cannot believe, no matter what we are told about him. This is perhaps an unfair comparison to make, but poetry must be compared to the best, the result judged by the aim. That Webb failed in his high purpose is not surprising when we remember his age. The astonishing thing is that in a great deal he succeeded so brilliantly. Although Boyd himself might stay a phantom, the characters who talk of him are all clearly drawn, each speaking his own idiom: the Norwegian boat-builder who knows only the *Wanderer*, nothing of the man who sailed in her; the envious journalist padding his story at sixpence a line who sees into the dangerous heart of Boyd; Sir Oswald Brierly, the sea-painter, interested in his own worries, who forgets his sitter; the tough whaler who detested the man's patronizing ways and longs to be back at sea with "a

* *A Drum for Ben Boyd*, 1948, (Angus and Robertson, Castlereagh Street, Sydney, and 48 Bloomsbury Street, London); *Leichhardt Pantomime* appeared serially in *The Sydney Bulletin*.

clean wind, not stained with rotten cabbages"; the Papuan shepherd recalling the terror of the ship's arrival:

> Through the thick morning steam they took shape,
> With fierce white symbols shaking above them in air;
> Sea-monsters from icy regions bringing cold tides with them.
> Some of us trembled and clapped hands slowly in fear,
>
> While others fingered their spears and stones in doubt;
> But when flame sprang, and spirits squeaked overhead
> And an incredible thunder troubled the trees,
> We crouched in terror lest our sky drip blood.
>
> And then the men with bloodless brittle faces,
> With ferocious prayers, solemn and rhythmical,
> Seized many of us, the young and the virile,
> Dragging us through the surf to impure burial
>
> In the bellies of their tamed monsters.

Then the politician, shutting his eyes deliberately to Boyd's rascalities; the pioneer at Monarco maddened at seeing the land he loves seized by speculators; the captain of the *Oberon* returning with the native's skull and speculating about death; and finally, John Webster who watched Boyd during his last voyage and sensed his coming doom.

We see each of these figures clearly but behind them Ben Boyd himself remains a shadow. That is the weakness of the poems. Without the brief prose introduction a reader who had never heard of Boyd would, after he had put the book down, have little idea what kind of a person he was and what exactly he had done to arouse interest in such varied people. Once that has been said, however, we can accept the individual portraits with astonishment that they were the creation of so young a poet, but I have quoted little because I wish to reserve space for what I consider a far greater achievement, the narrative poem, *Leichhardt Pantomime*, an extraordinary and at the same time a most exasperating work.

To understand why Webb used such a confusing form one would have to know him personally, and unfortunately we have not met, but, as a stranger, I would hazard that his Leichhardt is spiritually autobiographical. The explorer who wandered through the wilds of Australia in tall hat and frock-coat and who finally vanished, leaving not even a bone, with herds of cattle and numerous enthusiasts following him to some promised land of rich pasturage, was certainly not the tormented creature shown in Webb's poem. The true Leichhardt appears to have been a self-satisfied fellow, a German mystic, slightly mad yet with a touch of genius, but in Webb's hands he becomes a neurotic shrinking from the honest

portraiture of mirrors and torturing himself with dread of what others think of him. Such an explorer as Leichhardt who had the self-assurance and the calm courage to wander alone through the bush could not have suffered the self-doubts which Webb finds in his heart. And the form of the poem is bewildering.

Inexplicably, it opens in a waxworks. Then it bursts into cries of rage and defiance of life, slips into a casual narrative style interrupted occasionally with almost embarrassing touches of humour, and finally returns to the waxworks. Nevertheless, with all its faults of construction, it touches genius, spinning from mockery to self-pity and fury:

He mounts like Quixote on a spavined old nag
That can kick the slogan from a sugar-bag;
He mayn't know north from south, but he's clever
At playing with windmills in the Never-Never.
Off! with a cooee and a ribald song,
One stirrup short, one stirrup long.

Some disapproval and murmuring, at this stage,
Answered by a clown, besmeared with flour and ketchup,
Lolloping forth from the wings. His spiel as follows:

"So all of you, my friends, have conquered laughter?
That creased and monstrous painted effigy
That sags and billows behind you—at the desk,
The typewriter, in the shaving-mirror?
You may write words or ride in omnibuses,
Give lectures, name a river, kill a man,
But always the obscene, the senseless titter
Tenses your shoulder-blades. Start up in fury,
Double your fist and strike! Strike till the painted
Mouth splays with blood, from the glass goggling eyes
Tears trickle, and the pudgy limbs go loose—
What have you forced but laughter, tears of laughter?—
The fat doll shaking with it, a giggling scream
Babbling and fluttering round you. There's no violence
Can stifle laughter.
Well, then, laugh with the thing!
Turn on it with ugly mimic carnival,
Guffaw and shout and stamp, until your voice
Cuts off its air, splinters its blinking eyes,
Till its head rolls off in a corner and its powers
Settle like chains tossed down—
This not the Prince but his creator knew:
Not Leichhardt. No, friends. Not the Doctor.

Here we see both the power and the weakness of Webb who often falls back on colourless adjectives, empty phrases such as: "Endless assaults of blackness . . . Repulsed by sallies of firelight . . . fathomless blue discs of water . . . dull creak of the hobbles". These are the thunder of youth in love with words for their own sake, a weakness which time undoubtedly will eliminate, and they are forgotten under the power of other passages, such as this waxwork scene towards the end of the poem:

> There may be agony in furnished rooms;
> Rather, they are its perfect setting. Walls
> Clamp down on motive, and the flesh of motive
> Puffs up whiter in prominence. The rage
> Contracted in the mirror; the sea-passion
> Trembling in the painted shell; the dust
> Beating under the suction of loose curtains:
> These the reflections, struggles, witless pacings
> Of the man in the furnished room. The neat montage
> Of flawless gaslight gathers in his movements;
> Exact, predictable as waves, his thoughts
> Shatter themselves between the bedstead's knuckles.
> Therefore, we bring the Doctor to this room.

Glancing through what I have written I feel I may have been a little unfair to Webb. That is one of the curses of criticism, by dwelling on weaknesses one is liable to give a false impression. And Webb is still a young man. Few young men, indeed, have written with such grasp, not only on technique, but on reality, and I do not doubt that shortly he will be able to unknot this secret anger in his soul, this fear of life's brutality and others' mockery, and will then produce a work of true greatness showing an understanding of character worthy of Browning and with a lyrical quality that Browning too frequently lacked.

SIXTEEN SINGERS

On The Hill by John Masefield (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.); *The World's Room* by Laurence Whistler. Decorations by Rex Whistler (Heinemann, 15s.); *Poems and Songs* by E. N. Da C. Andrade (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.); *Speak with the Sun* by David Campbell (Chatto & Windus, 6s.); *Veld Patriarch* by Francis Carey Slater (Longmans, 8s. 6d.); *Furin* by Giles Dixey (B. H. Blackwell, Oxford, 8s. 6d.); *After the Bombing* by Edmund Blunden (Macmillan, 6s.); *The Old Knight* by Herbert Palmer (Dent, 7s. 6d.); *Clue of Darkness* by Jack Lindsay (Andrew Dakers, 5s.); *To Awaken Pegasus* by Lord Dunsany (George Ronald, Oxford, 6s.); *Two Colloquies* by Martyn Skinner (Putnam, 3s. 6d.); *Until That Dawn* by Dorothy Una Ratcliffe (Univ. of London Press, 6s.); *Translations and Verses* by Sir Duff Cooper (The Dropmore Press, 15s.); *Poems* by Gerald Bullett (Cambridge University Press, 5s.); *Epitaphs and Occasions* by Roy Fuller (John Lehmann, 6s.); *Quartets for Four Voices* by E. H. W. Meyerstein ("Music-Survey", Oakfield School, S.E. 21, 6s.).

Reviewed by
WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

If there is anything in the old contention that poetry in its essence is song—imagination and emotion expressing themselves in and through rhythmic language—then all the poets under review are conformists and may be said to be traditionalists. The Poet Laureate has always, and unashamedly, been a ballad-maker or rhyming minstrel, and in his modestly entitled "book of new verse", *On the Hill* Mr. Masefield uses all his old welcome, and sometimes irritating, tricks with a good deal of his old gusto. There are poems in this book which will be godsends to incipient Gold Medallists, stuff crying aloud for dramatic rendering. Some of the pieces are of the "butter and eggs and a pound of cheese" order, fanciful tales of a pre-Raphaelite subject-matter and technique; others celebrate the wresting of Granada from the Moors; but I find the true Masefield in his hilltop vision of man's foundation:

> Something that outlasts our minute, and has majesty for reason,
> While its granites wear to sands.

Mr. Laurence Whistler's Collected Poems, *The World's Room,* appear in a handsome volume embellished with twenty-two decorations by his brother the late Rex Whistler; and these drawings are quite lovely in their formal Augustan accomplishment. I had never before read and pondered so much of this poet's work, and on the whole it has been a grateful experience. For Mr. Whistler has an enviable degree of imagina-

tive and technical equipment which, for the most part, flows on gently and unexceptionably like a summer stream: here an image and there an image, like facets of dancing light on water, but seldom the sense and pulse of a full-rushing torrent. It is polished work, in which I cry sometimes for a roughness, an awkwardness to accent the general smoothness: and yet, how good that smoothness is with "The blackbird in his vocal graph of fear scattering darkness down the painted glade" and the mouse that "rattled like a little marble across the ceiling". In such lines his work strangely resembles that of his artist brother, interpreting and decorating at one and the same time.

To many readers it will come as something of a surprise to realise that Professor Andrade is a poet as well as a scientist and brains-truster. His *Poems and Songs* reveal a talent that derives from a loving acquaintanceship with two of the best periods in English lyrical verse, the Elizabethan and the Jacobean. In a sense much of his work may be pastiche, but it is very charming and memorable.

A more urgent and vigorous note is struck in *Speak With the Sun*, a first book by a young Australian poet. David Campbell, who we are told writes from the heart of that continent. With all the brevity of his verse there is a surging and assertive masculinity in his work.

Here in six lines is the desolation and the terror of a scene which certain novelists fail to compress into six hundred pages:

> For fifteen men in jungle green
> Rose from the kunai grass
> And came towards the plane. My men
> In silence watched them pass;
> It seemed they looked upon themselves
> In Time's prophetic glass.

There are European echoes in Mr. Campbell's book, but in the main it is a singularly fresh voice that speaks and it augurs well for the state of poetry "down under".

South Africa is represented by Mr. Francis Carey Slater's *Veld Patriarch*. Mr. Slater is a veteran of verse whose work has been deservedly praised at home and overseas for nearly half a century and this present book gleans from seven of his eight earlier publications, so that readers may see him in the round. His is a note both robust and reflective: the scene and the impulse are mainly South Africa, but the treatment has a universal quality.

The next book on the table is most generous in quantity and in many ways most interesting—not to say puzzling. *Furin* by Giles Dixey is 400-pages long and contains the "collected verses" of four decades. Rhymes, obviously, come to Mr. Dixey as the sparks fly upward, brightly, swiftly and inevitably. Whether he is in Oxford or serving in the Merchant Service or on the Western Front in the First World War, or teaching for

twenty years at the famous Dragon School, or living in the Middle East, all is grist to a rhyming mill that grinds smoothly and well. Indeed, I get the impression that his daily dozen of rhyme is as sacrosanct with him as a midnight entry is to your confirmed diarist; Yet, in the upshot, I wish he had cut the book by two-thirds.

Mr. Edmund Blunden's *After the Bombing* is most rewarding. I read and re-read these forty-five poems with critical delight, savouring each one with peculiar gratitude to a poet who has passed his half-century but still retains his faculty of wonder undimmed. But not alone wonder (that occasional experience which would make most people poets if no other test applied), for a great part of Mr. Blunden's success is due to a steady perfecting of technique which, unlike that of so many of his contemporaries, seldom shows any trace of strain or affectation. He is never wildly experimental; he would not contest, I think, the charge of being a traditionalist. What he brings to verse is the seeing eye and an understanding ear as well-tuned to the subtle harmonies and discords of the surrounding world as his mind is to the sense and cadence of the English language. Truly for him "The splendours of the world Are such that number and enquiry fade". But the little things, the every day pictures enchant him too.

His physical eye is as swift as a wren's, but his inward eye sees too, sifting and selecting for the purposes of art. The impulse that moves and the vision that directs his work may be seen to be one continuous process in the life of man.

To be described on your book-jacket as "the symbolist and apocalyptic bardic poet" is a pretty heavy sail to carry, but few would quarrel with its application to Mr. Herbert Palmer, who is all these and Palmer too. In *The Old Knight* his singing utterance is at its strongest—and often at its saddest. He cries out, "I am clean done for, and must soon be drowned; For I have fallen down beneath my Song",—but that is an inevitable mood, and how fortunately unwarranted it is may be seen in the Blakean beauty of these lines from *Sky-Chosen:*

> But the lowest shall be uplifted
> When the wheat from the tares is sifted,
> For the gleaners are not human,
> Though the reaping hooks complain.

And in the poem *Autobiography: 1949* this most spontaneous of living poets achieves a stanza of heart-searching nobility:

> Strange loneliness has been my lot,
> Deep in my heart resentment's stone.
> Something of wrong must be forgot,
> For all are wronged who walk alone.

A more objective use of the lyric form, though akin to Mr. Palmer's in its spontaneity, is found in Mr. Jack Lindsay's *Clue of Darkness*, an ambitious poem-sequence in which the great Theseus, now an old man, returns to Crete where in his youth he had killed the Minotaur and won the love of Ariadne, whom he afterwards deserted. He finds the quay distracting and littered, the once terrible maze dwindled and withered and tourists strolling where he had slain the monster. That is the scene of the twist given to a classical story by a modern romanticist, but the lyrics might as well be celebrating a resurrected Hamlet invoking the ghost of Ophelia, for the gloss of introspection and self-analysis is more credibly modern Mr. Jack Lindsay's than the legendary Hero's.

When Lord Dunsany treats a classical theme, however, we get no such modern-dress treatment. The best poem in *To Awaken Pegasus* is *Ulysses, Bound to the Mast* which, in the grand manner of the stanzaic ode, revives one of the world's great legends in verse of singular dignity and beauty. I wish I could quote more than these final lines:

> . . . And, if from the wall
> Of some fair city men should line the shore
> To welcome us with song and festival,
> Say I am sick, say that my heart is sore,
> And that no songs of men can touch it any more.

Two Colloquies by Mr. Martyn Skinner brings us back to wit and argument in slick heroic couplets which describe and discuss the modern scene in its political, economic, technical and social aspects. For a sample, try:

> What are your gadgets, labour-saving gains,
> And the whole bag of tricks of cars and trains,
> But lavish toys by doting parents piled
> Upon a hooligan half-witted child
> Who'll break them up or tie them to the cat?

I would recommend Mr. Wilfred Pickles to acquire a copy of Miss Dorothy Una Ratcliffe's *Until That Dawn*, for this attractive book contains some of the best poems in the Yorkshire dialect that have come my way. What the author labels "Lyrics in Standard English" are of the easy, lilting order and are perhaps none the worse for that, but her *forte* is dialect.

Sir Duff Cooper is of that fast-vanishing order of politicians and public servants who combine the practice of literature with their main occupations. In *Translations and Verses*, he uses his considerable ability in ancient and modern tongues to give us renderings in impeccable verse from Horace, Ronsard, Du Bellay, Heine, Rimbaud and Baudelaire among others; and in his own right he offers many urbane poems, the most

notable of which are the twelve accomplished love sonnets which—like some famous others—are *From the Portuguese*.

That wide-ranging man of letters, Mr. Gerald Bullett, supplies a frugal but welcome repast in *Poems*. I have always admired his cool and quiet verse and loved the sure, economical strokes with which he evokes the English country scene as a background to man's spirit. I could dilate upon the beauty of many of Mr. Bullett's brief poems, but will content myself with earnestly recommending the profound and moving long piece, *Winter Solstice* with which the book ends.

To read Mr. Roy Fuller's *Epitaphs and Occasions* after Mr. Bullett is to change atmospheres with a vengeance. Here is the conscious brilliance of the prestidigitator, alert with epigram and modern allusion. He considers Lake Leman, remembering Rousseau and Gibbon, Shelley and Byron, and speculates:

> Perhaps there are new tropes for our own world
> Where, in their madmen's stupor, empires wait,
> The flies of factions on their rigid masks,
> Lost in a dream of homicide and hate.

And in another poem he speaks of "the demon scientists and rulers of the land" who "Pile the bombs like busy crabs pile balls of sand", a thought salutary enough in all conscience.

And finally we have Mr. E. H. W. Meyerstein's *Quartets For Four Voices,* which may seem to have a titular resemblance to Mr. Eliot's *Four Quartets* but is a very different affair. In six highly-dramatic four-movement pieces, voices roughly similar to 'cello, violins and viola are to speak their assigned lines separately and in chorus; and as the verse is clear and comprehensible and deals with such matters as the post-war world and the love of a bookworm for his mother's maid, and as it is frequently humorous and does not disdain the Ding-Dong-Bell and Cock-Robin metres, I see no reason why Mr. Meyerstein should not start a fashion and give our intelligent young people in art's clubs and elsewhere something to speak and chant with appropriate gestures and attitudes. Didn't someone say, *All art aspires to a condition of music?*

SHORT REVIEWS

Selected Poems by William Carlos Williams, (New Directions, The New Classics Series, 1 dollar 50 cents.)

The White Threshold, poems by W. S. Graham, (Faber and Faber, 8s. 6d.)

"A poem," Dr. Williams has said, "is a small (or large) machine made of words. When I say there's nothing sentimental about a poem I mean that there can be no part, as in any other machine, that is redundant . . . Its movement is intrinsic, undulant, a physical more than a literary character. Therefore each speech having its own character, the poetry it engenders will be peculiar to that speech, also in its own intrinsic form. The effect is beauty, *what in a single object resolves our complex feelings of propriety* . . . "

That passage will puzzle many readers. Let me expand it a little, and then show how it applies to Dr. Williams's own work. The first two sentences are clear enough. No poem has a right to have any word or phrase, or repeated cadence in it, that does not contribute *obviously* to its total effect. In another sense than that of Dr. Williams, there should be nothing mechanical; no pounding machine of metre to which the sense is fed in to be chopped up, no padding to fill out a line, no undue emphasis or rhetorical expansion to make a thought, or a feeling, or a perception look more impressive than it actually is. The poem does not set about to transform an actual situation; it seeks merely to note it down in such an exact way that it has the same effect on the reader as the poet. There can be nothing "sentimental", in that the poet must not rely in the least on the reader's stock responses or proper feelings. The character of a poem is physical rather than literary in the sense that its pauses and emphases reflect—probably in a rather condensed and heightened way—the poet's pauses and emphases in ordinary speech; Dr. Williams's poems in fact are written in an accentual free verse in which a sense of the poet's voice hesitating between the short lines makes much of the rhythmic effect. The intrinsic form is in the situation which the poem presents; not in anything the poet can say *about* that situation, talking around it. Thus Dr. Williams has imposed on himself a set of extremely severe rules. His poems largely point at things, and the things pointed at must make the poetry. The generalisations have to be made—but not too explicitly—at the back of the reader's mind. The rules do not permit Dr. Williams to make them. This theory of poetry results at its best in poetry of an extreme, bare simplicity and of an extraordinary particular immediacy;

poetry a little like one's notion of Chinese and Japanese poetry, as in this lament of a widow for her dead husband in spring:

> To-day my son told me
> that in the meadows,
> at the edge of the heavy woods
> in the distance, he saw
> trees of white flowers.
> I feel that I would like
> to go there
> and fall into those flowers
> and sink into the marsh near them.

The reader can work out the generalisations for himself; "Spring reminds me of all the delights of love. But my lover is dead. So all this beauty makes me want to die too." But it is the whole art of the poem that these generalisations remain implicit; that they are shown and not said. Dr. Williams is not always at this level; sometimes he points at something, and nothing much seems to be implied. But at his best he is a poet whose clean and stringent discipline is an example to the young.

Mr. Graham is another poet with a private discipline. In his earlier work, he did not aim at making any prose sense; he used words having purely in mind their obscure connotative connections with each other. His poems had a dour, strong, and gritty texture but they were impenetrable to the logical mind; they did not seek either to describe situations or express thoughts. Mr. Graham seemed to be exploring, with great talent and energy, a *cul-de-sac*, that of expressive incommunicability. In this new collection, he permits himself to make statements (even perfectly straightforward and simple statements) and one feels an enormous relief; it is also obvious that his earlier dumbbell exercises have given him a lovely ripple of muscle. I have not much space to quote.

This is one of many passages mimicking a sea movement,

> The surge by day by night turns lament
> And by this night falls round the surrounding
> Seaside and countryside and I can't
> Sleep one word away on my own for that
> Grief sea . . .

Graham, too, is a stripped, intrinsic poet. G. S. FRASER.

Poems—King Sobieski: Faustus: The Masque of Norbury Park by Raoul Pugh (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.)

Sidney Keyes was not twenty-one when he was killed, but there are no other poets I can think of immediately—except Rimbaud—who were as fulfilled as he was by that age. Raoul Pugh met his death at twenty-two,

but he lacked one great advantage that Keyes had—some terms at a university, together with the early maturing of intellectual and aesthetic outlook that such experience brings.

The author of the memoir preceding Raoul Pugh's three long poems, does wrong to suggest that he had left personal emotion behind him; his work makes perfectly clear that he had not yet reached to that stage. And indeed there is no reason why he should have done. Except in very rare cases twenty-two is too early for that fusion between art and personality on which a poet's greatest work must be based.

To those with a *Quarterly* turn of mind these three poems of Pugh may appear overlong, artificial, and imitative. It is unfortunate that there are lines like:

"and still there dies
A Turk for every foot of bloody field."—

and phrases like "swinked gypsies" (whatever that may mean, the Middle English word "swink" being a noun for "work").

Yet, all in all, Pugh was a poet and he was only twenty-two.

JOHN WALLER.

Modern Poetry and the Tradition by Cleanth Brooks. (Editions, Poetry London, 12s. 6d.).

This is in fact a reprint of a book published over ten years ago in the United States. Many of its defects, therefore, are easily explicable, if not excusable, if the reader knows the true date of its publication. For example, the remarks on Mr. Auden's poems are inevitably inadequate for readers to-day. Nevertheless, the bulk of Mr. Brooks' book has worn very well. Evidently it has neither been revised nor brought up to date, and this is even more serious than the fact that the proofs of the book could not have been read at all, unless by a complete illiterate, for the text abounds in exasperating misprints.

Mr. Cleanth Brooks is a justly distinguished figure in contemporary American criticism, and he wisely is concerned here with W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, Robert Frost, Robert Penn Warren, Archibald MacLeish and W. H. Auden, with an apology for the omission of Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, Donald Davidson and Hart Crane. It appears at once then that Mr. Brooks approaches modern poetry from a metaphysical standpoint, and that his interest is largely in the metaphor, wit, and "inner logic" of poetry.

My general impression, however, is that there is a good deal more of modern poetry in his book than of the tradition, and this is, I suppose, roughly as it should be. Mr. Brooks' is undoubtedly very successful in the way he "places" our modern poets in relation to the tradition, and his various distinctions are ones which not merely stay in the memory as

real things experienced, but do help greatly to bring into focus some of the different types of new writing that have been adopted during the last half-century. He early on tackles the problem of what was wrong with the last century and arrives at a distinction between what he calls the poetry of *exclusion,* that is the poetry which accepts only certain apparently desirable words and thoughts as poetic, and the poetry of *inclusion,* which, he maintains, is prepared to include all words, thoughts and experience as poetic, so long as its significance is of sufficient intensity.

Still, one of my main reactions to the book as a whole is that Mr. Brooks continually labours his point with almost Teutonic boorishness.

Mr. Brooks' book has an annoyingly short bibliography and a valuable index. It positively infuriates the serious reader by never citing the *loci* of textual quotations, and by a number of misquotations of poems. Its treatment of metaphor, wit and irony in the first three chapters, its valuable refutation of the political propagandists' dishonest and superficial use of the insult "ivory tower", its chapters on the myth of the Waste Land and on W. B. Yeats as Myth-Maker, are all packed with critical judgments and suggestions which must interest everyone who reads the best poetry of our century.

PETER RUSSELL.

W. E. Henley by John Connell (Constable, 21s.).

Athough in the present century two books have been devoted to William Ernest Henley, whose birth centenary was celebrated last year (one by L. Cope Cornford in 1913 and another by an American, J. H. Buckley, in 1945), it has remained for Mr. John Connell to provide us with the authentic Henley biography. In so doing, he has reinstated a great Victorian literary personality with a wealth of material and a balanced judgment that are not likely to be superseded.

At one time it was expected that Charles Whibley, one of Henley's closest friends and disciples, would furnish a biography by drawing upon six bound volumes of Henley's letters to himself in chronological order, but evidently Whibley did not choose to undertake the task. On these letters the present life has been based. While the correspondence reveals many hitherto unsuspected aspects of Henley, and shows that Whibley was an irritating and incorrigibly dilatory contributor to Henley's *Scots* (later *National*) *Observer*, I think that Mr. Connell might, with advantage, have shortened his book if he had been more sparing in his quotations from these letters.

Throughout Henley's literary career poetry and journalism alternated with fair regularity. In 1867 he drifted into journalism and by 1869 he was contributing anonymous jingling verses to *The Period*, edited by Harry Vizetelly. Five years later he was in the Edinburgh Infirmary, where his

remaining leg was saved from being amputated, and there he began to compose the famous series of poems, *In Hospital*.

His first venture as an editor was a weekly review, *London*, which he directed in the metropolis. It served as a channel for his own occasional verse. Then putting poetry aside temporarily, he absorbed himself in play-writing in collaboration with R. L. Stevenson. The friendship between the two writers lasted for thirteen years, Stevenson's character of Long John Silver in *Treasure Island* being based on Henley. As he himself admitted: "Henley's maimed masterfulness gave me the germ from which John Silver grew". In 1888 came the foolish disagreement, which was never patched up. Mr. Connell handles this well-known episode with commendable impartiality, though he leaves us in no doubt that both Henley and Mrs. Stevenson were antagonistic to each other from the beginning of the friendship, and that Henley himself was partly responsible for the strained relations that had to terminate.

Returning to Edinburgh in 1888, Henley began to conduct his celebrated weekly journal, *The Scots Observer*, which was transferred to London in 1891 and re-christened *The National Observer*. He gathered round him a brilliant coterie of young writers, constituting what Sir Max Beerbohm facetiously called "the Henley Regatta". One of the group was the twenty-four-year-old Rudyard Kipling, the merit of whose early poems Henley was surely the first to recognise.

Henley's own poetry was original in technique, developing a form of *vers libre*. Mr. Connell makes an apt comparison between him and the war poets of 1914-18, and it is gratifying to read that he considers "some of Henley's poems are among the finest lyrics in the English language".

Ruling his contributors as a literary dictator, an autocrat of journalism, or, as Francis Thompson called him, "the Viking chief of letters", Henley had certainly a colourful personality. He was boisterous and piratical, lusty and excitable, on occasion giving vent to strong language, especially in denunciation. But he was heroic when faced with dire misfortune, and he had many disappointments in his life. On the other hand, he enjoyed a truly happy married existence. The one blow, from which he never seemed to recover, was the death of his only child, Margaret.

When, in 1895, the Chair of English Literature at Edinburgh University fell vacant, Henley's friends pursued a campaign to get him appointed to the post. In spite of their fighting tooth and nail for him, he failed to succeed. George Saintsbury was installed as Professor.

Mr. Connell has brought out well the indomitable courage of the crippled giant in some telling passages where he gives us a vivid picture of the valiant fight he put up during his last illness.

At last he won his well-deserved rest.

W. M. PARKER

Secret Country, by Jorge Carrera Andrade. Translated by Muna Lee (The Macmillan Company, New York); *Poèmes Choisis*, by Jorge Carrera Andrade. Préface et Traduction de Edmond Vandercammen (La Maison du Poète, Bruxelles).

Jorge Carrera Andrade published his first book of poems in 1922 at the age of nineteen. It was a time of unrest and ferment in the Latin-American literary world; the influence of symbolism was on the wane and Latin American poets were in search of new orientations in the chaos of post-war poetic movements. Carrera Andrade stated his *art poétique* unequivocally in a poem called *The Object and the Shadow*, declaring himself a lover of objects, of a visible world free from the shadows of thought and abstraction.

Indeed, his greatest gift is a capacity for seeing things with clarity, with precision, with minuteness and this visual capacity has accompanied him throughout his poetic career. As well as being his greatest gift, it is also his dearest possession. This power for creating visual images is united to a great simplicity of language, the simplicity of common speech.

Characteristic of his early period of thoughtless vision, of acute consciousness of the shapes, colours and sounds of his native Ecuador is his poem on Ecuador, *Place of Origin*:

> I come from the land of the custard-apple
> that brocade bag with its rind prevents
> the spilling of sweetness from its rounded snow.

Apart from the sensual enjoyment of the material world, the preoccupation with fruit, vegetables, animals and insects and their sensuous associations, he achieves more impressive, large-scale effects as, for example, in his description of a waterfall:

> A waterfall juggles its mirrors
> hurling its sheep of water
> like a flock over a mountain pass.

or a tropical horizon:

> And the far-off horizon is an ox
> meditatively ruminating distances.

His attitude of sensual enjoyment without *arrière-pensée* is peculiar in that he regards the objects of his enjoyment as possessions.

In the 1930's his poetry underwent a change. The titles of his poems speak for themselves: *Dust*, *Corpse of Time*, *Loneliness in Cities*, *Nothing Belongs to Us*. There is no longer the delectation in the sight of things and their translation into shining vignettes. He has begun to doubt the reality of his experiences and is left with a feeling of empty-handed loneliness and desolation. In *Voyage de Retour*, he expresses weariness, a desire for

simplicity and rest in his native Ecuador and a general uncertainty about the meaning of his life:

> Rêvai-je ce visage sur le mur,
> cette main sur ma peau,
> ce chemin de pommes
> et de colombes, le rêvai-je, le rêvai-je?

In one of his most recent poems, *John without Heaven*, he describes how he is dispossessed of his charming treasure of harvests and oranges of joy:

> De l'or du couchant, je perdis la trace
> Je m'appelle Jean, Jean le dépossédé.
> Le ver est là où régnait la rosée
> et j'ai perdu tout un trésor de siècles.

His poetry has matured, but the deepening of feeling has not diminished his visual capacity. The easy ecstatic lyricism of the early poetry has given way to a more serious, intimate tone and his visual images have become gradually more charged with subjective emotion. There is a unity and continuity throughout his development which is the mark of a great poet. English admirers will shortly have the opportunity of studying it closely for Andrade's latest work *Visitor of Mist* is "in the press", with Messrs. Williams and Norgate.

G. R. COULTHARD.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I have heard of people "agreeing to disagree": but never before has it been my delight to encounter one who *disagrees in order to agree*—as Mr. Howard Parsons does. About the general necessity of rhyme he seems to endorse my ideas. As to its ornamentality, I think I may claim to agree with him even more heartily than he agrees with himself . . .

Yours, etc.

ROY CAMPBELL

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET AWARD FOR 1949

Lord Alfred Douglas would certainly have been impressed by the quality of the majority of sonnets in the 1949 competition that bears his name. And yet, too frequently, the basic principle of this poetic form is forgotten or ignored. The making of a sonnet can be likened to a flow of water on parched ground: the water makes its own form, and the poet's mood must run into the shape of a sonnet. Never can the poet say: "I am going to write a sonnet".

Nevertheless, as poetry "written to order", in, say, the fashion that Keats and Leigh Hunt followed when they each wrote a sonnet in response to a challenge one evening at the fireside, a number of the entries have not only gratified the judges, but impressed them. The award goes to Mr. W. R. Latham for his beautiful *All Things by Contraries*. Highly commended are Miss Margaret Howard for *Love Song*, Miss Wrenne Jarman for *Salvage*, Mr. Peter Russell for *Melos*, and Miss Joan E. Swift for *Morning Magic*.

ALL THINGS BY CONTRARIES

All things by contraries their nature show,
As darkness' virtue is revealed by light;
Day is made vivid by contrasted night,
And swiftness proved and measured by the slow.
It is remembrance of the winter snow
That makes the summer petals burn more bright;
Were there no wrong, how should we judge of right;
Or stillness without stress and tempest know?

So in Time's eye the evils we endure
May, in their true proportion, emphasize
Those present blessings which we cannot see,
And when of our disease we find the cure
It may be patent to our opened eyes
That both were servants of our destiny.

W. R. LATHAM

PREMIUM AWARD

Some of the entries in the current competition are several pages long. Which means—invariably—too long. Either the poem degenerates into more or less genial verse or worse prose, in several cases petering out as prose hardly intelligible at all! The authentic poet, possessing imagination rather than mere forcefulness and also the artist's sustained emotion rather than a fleeting mood, is alone justified in risking a lengthy poem, and then at his peril! Even the relatively successful short poem by an inexperienced writer is often let down by a stanza in which the feeling has dried up.

I have had difficulty in choosing an entry sufficiently brief to avoid prosiness and yet to be consistently moving. *Voltava* by Mr. Midgley Russell, seems the most worthy. Mr. Russell has used Longfellow's successful technique with small-scale effect, and by maintaining his opening note of simplicity he conveys an effective and well-rounded picture.

My commendations this time are seldom made without qualification. A familiar theme must have unfamiliar expression if the writer is to avoid the critic's question why his poem has been written at all.

THOMAS MOULT

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Marjorie Campbell Cooke, S.W.3.
Joan Dawson, Hampshire.
Louisa F. Moore, Londonderry.
Mabel Parker, Cheshire.
Celia Randall, Co. Down.
Jean Strang, N.2.

VOLTAVA

Drifting drifting o'er the waters
Of the sleeping slow Voltava,
Scarcely moving in the shadows
Stole a slim, a silent vessel;

In the stern a drowsing poet,
On the prow a painted sunflower,
In the stream a cunning image,
In his dream her image gleaming.

Drifting drifting toward the Island
The canoe—of dreams the burthen—
Where the sombre trees of even
Stood expectant on the meeting.

From the layrinthine fabric
Crept a subtle perfumed splendour,
Roused the dreaming poet swiftly
Arms extended he to greet her,

Meet her, clasp her to his bosom,
On the bearing tide uplift her:
So they vanished in the evening
On the river, in the darkness.

MIDGLEY RUSSELL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRESENTATIONS TO GALLOWAY KYLE. FIRST DIRECTOR OF "THE POETRY SOCIETY", HONOURING HIS RETIREMENT

Three years ago "G.K." retired and in the words of *The Evening News* of December 14th last, "after managing the Society, and editing *The Poetry Review*, passed on their work to younger hands".

Those hands continue, but the heads and hearts behind them have not forgotten. So on December 15th, 1949, "G.K." was lured from his slippered ease to make yet another bow; for a benevolent conspiracy of his friends certainly could not pass pleasantly by an occasion in the Fortieth Anniversary Year of the Society he had encouraged from inception, without his inspiriting presence.

The occasion having been designed, the date was happily able to coincide with the presentation of the first William Foyle Prize for Poetry, of which the present editor of *The Poetry Review*, as a lyric poet, was one of the four selected judges. Co-operating with the Council of the Society in Spring last year, he suggested their general liaison with this personal appointment. The result was stage One: "G.K." receiving his first testimony of affection on Foyle Prize Day at a Dorchester Hotel Luncheon where a beautifully-bound book, including messages to him from the Queen, Queen Mary and Princess Elizabeth was produced by a further group of loyalists. This was handed to him, after a moving speech of tribute, by Miss Margaret Rawlings, who enthusiastically and unflaggingly led stage Two, The Poetry Society's Special Reading at 33 Portman Square to delight him three hours later, when the Misses Elizabeth Brough, Mollie Hudson, Irene Brent, Jane Fergus and Honor Blackman lent their golden and adoring, adorable voices to dorate further the valedictory testimonies inadequately, but respectfully, inscribed upon the presentation cheque, tended to him by the President in the name of the whole Society.

THE GALLOWAY KYLE PRESENTATION FUND

(Closing Contributors)

William Addison, Esq.
Miss W. Barrows.
Mrs. Z. B. Boardman.
Wilton Cole, Esq.
Miss D. Dearing.
Miss D. J. Dowling.
Mrs. E. M. Fison.
Miss A. McCarthy Hickey.
Miss M. H. Huntsman.
Mrs. F. E. Kingston.
T. Moore, Esq.
Miss Ruth A. Oakley.
Howard Parsons, Esq.
Miss W. Power.
Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Ramsey.
Miss Laura Smithson.
K. C. Wakeham, Esq.
Robert Walter, Esq.

THE GALLOWAY KYLE PRESENTATION FUND

(Dr. Marie Stopes' Extension)

Mrs. Aarvold.
Anonymous Contribution.
Robert Armstrong, Esq.
Lady Barlow (Miss Margaret Rawlings).
Mrs. Clifford Bax.
Viscount Bledisloe, P.C., G.C.B.
Miss Brake.
Mrs. Briant.
Commander Cadogan.
Viscount Camrose.
The Earl of Cromer, P.C., G.C.B.
Walter de la Mare, Esq., F.R.S.L.
Miss D. de B. Dobson.
The Rev. Canon Adam Fox, M.A.
H. Goad, Esq.
The Misses Goodman.
Mrs. Juanita Grant.
Sir Richard Gregory, F.R.S.
Lord Horder, G.C.V.O., M.D.
K. A. Keevil, Esq.
Major Kindersley.
Sir Arthur MacNalty, K.C.B., M.D.
E. H. W. Meyerstein, Esq., F.R.S.L.
Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, K.C.M.G.
Prof. Gilbert Murray, O.M.
Mrs. McGrigor Phillips.
Arthur Row, Esq.
The Earl Russell, F.R.S.
Lady Margaret Sackville.
Viscount Samuel, P.C., G.C.B.
Mrs. Jessie Scrivener.
Mrs. Stanley-Wrench.
Dr. Marie C. Stopes, F.L.S., F.R.S.L.
Dame Sybil Thorndike, D.B.E.
Lord Vansittart, P.C., G.C.B.
Sydney Walton, Esq.
F.M. Earl Wavell, P.C., G.C.B.
Miss Wedmore.
The Duchess of Wellington.

THE POETRY SOCIETY: ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual General Business Meeting of the Poetry Society (Incorporated) will be held at the offices of the Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, on Wednesday, May 24th, 1950 at 3-0 p.m., to receive the annual financial statement, and elect the general members of the General Council. Names of delegates representing Centres should be sent to the General Secretary not later than April 12th, together with names of the Centre representatives on the General Council.

Admission will be made upon production of membership cards.

Any member who wishes to bring any business before the Annual Meeting must give twenty-eight days' written notice thereof to the General Secretary. Nominations for membership to the General Council must be made by two members of the General Council or three unattached members twenty-eight days prior to the Meeting.

Any member wishing to inspect the audited Statement of Account before the General Business Meeting may do so at this office between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Saturdays excepted), or may have a copy sent on application enclosing a stamped addressed envelope after April 30th.

—By Order of the Council.

THE POETRY SOCIETY: ADULT GOLD MEDAL EXAMINATION

In awarding the Adult Gold Medal to Jane Fergus and Valerie Houchin, Miss Rawlings advised all candidates to do breathing exercises daily, as breath control was vital if there was not to be fading of line-endings. To speak a poem and give pleasure the candidates should know the poem perfectly and what the poet had in his mind.

If there is any sense of insecurity, Continuity is lost. The poem should be known and loved so well that it can be said without a moment's thought for the word that is coming next.

There is an ever-increasing demand for poetry-speaking these days and she advised the candidates to work hard, speaking poetry in their homes and to groups of people collected round them.

The next Adult Gold Medal Examination will take place at 33 Portman Square, W.1., on Thursday, June 1st, 1950, at 7 p.m. Entries close on May 1st, 1950.

EUROPEAN POETRY: BILINGUAL READINGS

at 33 Portman Square, W.1.

Friday, March 10th at 6.15 p.m. *A SELECTION OF FRENCH ROMANTIC POETRY*

(The bilingual readings of European poetry will in future form part of the regular Poetry Hour programmes on Fridays).

POETS' GROUP OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

The Group, dedicated to furthering the work of active Poets within the Society, gathering "to hear each other's work and discuss the spirit and substance of poetry", held its second meeting on January 18th at 12 Stanley Crescent, Kensington Park Gardens, W.11. All interested in attending future meetings are invited to communicate with me at that address.

LEIGH HENRY

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE POETRY CENTRE

March 11th at 3.0 p.m. *Poems on London.*
Mrs. E. Van den Bergh, Beacon View,
Beacon Hill: Penn 3274.
April 8th at 2-45 p.m. *Wordsworth and his Poetry.*
Mr. A. F. Fremantle, Greenways,
Beacon Hill: Penn 3169.

THE CAMBRIDGE POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to:—Douglas B. Mortlock, Esq., 187 Histon Road, Cambridge.

THE CHELSEA POETRY CIRCLE

(Affiliated to the Poetry Society. Formed 1946)

President:
Dame Sybil Thorndike

Vice-President:
Miss Margaret Rawlings

Informal readings are held each month in member's homes, and occasional public readings at the National Trust Museum, 3 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, S.W.3. Full particulars from the *Hon. Secretary*, John E. Carroll, 5 Redesdale Street, S.W.3.

THE EALING POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to:—Miss Mary Giles, 36 Kitchener Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.

THE FLORIDA POETRY CENTRES

(Formed 1946)

President General:
Marie Tello Phillips

Vice-President General:
Lillie Reed Zortman

State Presidents:

Connecticut: Lillie Offen Reed.
Florida: Pearl Safford.
Indiana: Grace Porterfield Polk.
Kentucky: Ethel Koger.
Maine: Effie Lawrence Marshall.
Minnesota: Margarette Dickson.
Pennsylvania: Lillie Reed Zortman.
Tennessee: Polly McKibben.

A *Year Book, 1949-1950*, recently received, announces considerable activity of these associated groups, particularly in Miami, Tampa, Pensacola, St. Petersburg, Coral Gables, Jacksonville and Naples; representatives have also been appointed in Key West (Marie Cappick) and Havana, Cuba (Cuca Vidal). Our grateful good wishes go to all for their interest and devotion.

THE GUILDFORD POETRY CENTRE

Details of meetings may be obtained from The Centre Secretary, Miss C. Kearse, 132 Maybury Road, Woking.

THE HAMPSTEAD POETRY CENTRE

The meetings of the Hampstead Poetry Centre will be held on the first and third Thursdays of the month, at 8—9.30 p.m. at 9 Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, N.W.3, by invitation of Miss M. H. Huntsman (Hon. Secretary). The next reading will be on March 16th, 1950, when we hope to welcome our members and friends.

March 16. *Iphigenia in Taurus* by Euripides.
Translation by Gilbert Murray.
April 6. *No Meeting.*
,, 20. *Mary Webb and Ruth Pitter.*
May 4. *Poems on "Sun, Moon and Stars".*
,, 18. *Robert Browning.*

THE KINGSTON-ON-THAMES POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to:—Philip Crick, Esq., 13 Queens Court, Richmond Park Gates, Kingston-on-Thames.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND POETRY CENTRE

The Northern Ireland Centre of the Poetry Society held its sixth Annual General Meeting in the Queen's Hotel, Belfast, on 26th September, 1949.

Owing to the absence of Mr. J. Nelson Browne, M.A., Chairman, the chair was taken by the Rev. J. W. Johnston, M.A.

Satisfactory reports were submitted by Mrs. O. G. Hasluck and Miss H. Haddock, joint Hon. Secretaries and by Mrs. K. Smyth, Hon Treasurer. The office bearers and members of the Executive Committee were re-elected with the addition of one new member, Miss Elizabeth Lindsay, B.A., L.T.C.L.

The President, Dr. D. Frazer-Hurst, M.A., Ph.D., just returned from a successful lecture tour of the United States of America, gave a most interesting account of his journey and described a meeting of the Companion Boston Poetry Society to which he had been invited. He conveyed fraternal greetings from poetry lovers in the new world to poetry lovers in the old.

Dr. D. Frazer-Hurst referred with regret to the loss of an esteemed patron with the departure of Sir D. Lindsay Keir, who is leaving Belfast to take up the appointment of Master of Balliol, and proposed that Dr. J. Stuart Hawnt, M.Sc., Ph.D., a former President, be elected as patron.

THE NOTTINGHAM POETRY CENTRE

The unflagging enthusiasm of this Centre has manifested itself once more in the recent publication of "A Second Nottingham Anthology of Original Poetry", a compilation devotedly made by Miss Lilian Rowarth, who provides poems by thirty-three poets including, Lake Aske, Madge Hales, herself, J. K. G. Hoffman and Alan Rook.

THE NOVA SCOTIA CENTRE

This Centre "decided to mark the Bicentenary of Halifax [in 1949] with a chapbook of poems and verses by residents of the Maritime Provinces or by former residents". Three prizes were offered, and more than five hundred poems submitted. The prize-winning poems were as follows:

1st Prize. *Eternal* by Agnes Foley Macdonald.
2nd Prize. *We Heard You Singing* by Muriel K. A. Edwards.
In the Fall of the Year by Helen Bryant Agar.
3rd Prize. *Halifax's Foundation Stone* by Ernest Prest Currie.
Song of the New Canadian by Margaret Preston.

A brochure containing eighty-five of the poems is "on demand" from our library.

THE REIGATE POETRY CENTRE

Details of Meetings may be obtained from the Centre Secretary, Mrs. M. A. Hicks, The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate.

THE SOUTHAMPTON POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to—Miss Joy Brider, 9 Archers Road, Southampton.

THE SUSSEX POETRY CENTRE

Enquiries should be sent to—Mrs. Doris R. Richards, Oak Cottage, Eason's Green, Framfield, Sussex.

Will anyone able and willing to start a Centre in any part of the country please communicate with the Secretary, 35 Portman Square, London, W.1.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S AUDITIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

The Poetry Society has conducted auditions and examinations in the art of verse-speaking for many years, and its success in this valuable cultural activity is attested by the fact that the number of schools and institutions in all parts of England which the Society examines, continually increases.

Junior preliminary examinations are available for the youngest children and these continue through various grades, up to the final test for adult students, for which the Society's gold medal is the final award for success.

General regulations governing these auditions may be obtained on application to The Registrar, 35 Portman Square, London, W.1, with whom arrangements can be made for auditions for schools, colleges, or private individuals.

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1950

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £30 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 35 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editor, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*.

Closing date is 31st December, 1950.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the offer of £10 in prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 15th August, 1950.

THE HOWARD PARSONS' EPIGRAM COMPETITION: 1951

The Poetry Society is empowered by Mr. Howard Parsons, a long-standing member of the Society, to offer the following prizes, endowed by him for an Epigram Competition.

1st prize, 5 guineas; 2nd prize, 2 guineas; 3rd prize, 1 guinea. Entries which should not have been previously published should be marked "Epigram" and should not bear a stamped addressed envelope, as MSS. cannot be returned. They should be addressed to The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, to reach here not later than 1st March, 1951. The Society reserves the right to extend the closing date of the competition should none of the entries reach the required standard.

THE POETRY SOCIETY JUNIOR VERSE COMPETITION

The Poetry Society have pleasure in announcing that in the next number a "Junior Section" will be inaugurated, which will include the results of the annual Junior Verse Competition. Schools throughout the country are invited to co-operate in submitting the work of their pupils.

The Competition will be divided into two classes:

(*a*) Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, to be submitted by any one competitor, age up to thirteen years last birthday. There will be a book prize inscribed by the Poetry Society.

(*b*) Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, to be submitted by any one competitor, age from fourteen to seventeen years last birthday. There will be a book prize, inscribed by the Poetry Society and four additional prizes of one year's Membership to the Poetry Society.

The poem may be on any subject. Closing date, 30th June, 1950. Entries to be addressed to: The Junior Verse Competition, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear the names and addresses of competitors and copies should be retained as these cannot be returned.

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1950

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing the fourth Annual Competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet upon any subject. One of the two forms adopted by Lord Alfred Douglas in his sonnets, must be used; these are:

For the Octave — 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1.

For the Sextet — 3, 4, 5; 3, 4, 5 or 3, 4; 3, 4; 3, 4.

The prize of £10 may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator; the winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1950. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

POEMS OF PLACE COMPETITION FOR 1950

Mrs. A. Dorothy Holmes, a Shropshire member of The Poetry Society, offers £10 annually in competition for poems of place. Competitors who must be members of The Poetry Society, may submit not more than two poems, previously unpublished, of not more than 100 lines. All entries should be typewritten and bear the name and address of the author; poems should be addressed to "The Holmes Prize", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, not later than 1st April, 1950. The judges may divide the prize money at their discretion, and the winning poem or poems may be published in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors are asked to keep copies of their entries as these cannot be returned.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S CRITICAL SERVICE

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service for Members. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minimum fee of 5s. The charge for the criticism of each additional poem is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.